41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

343 amorous affairs. If a man wanted a particular girl he would note
841 when she went to the menstrual hut, and would then persuade a
837 female friend to stay in the hut with her and turn her fancy away from her husband and towards this unannounced suitor. A girl's parents or husband would therefore keep a careful watch on who else was in the hut. In a small hamlet, on the other hand, the female
343 population might be so little that a woman would often find herself
841 alone in the hut. In that case she would be afraid to sleep there by
754 herself for fear of Kurumba sorcerers and ghosts. (This fear ran
775 counter to the Badaga belief that Kurumbas themselves were afraid of menstruating women, and hence would never enter the hut and secretly ravish or attack any menstruating woman through sorcery.) Because of this fear, a woman who was alone in the hut would persuade another who was due to menstruate in the next few days to tell her family the period had already begun, so that the two could sleep together in the hut. This ruse would not allow the second woman to spend extra time in the hut however, and she might well continue to menstruate after leaving it, but would keep the matter
841 secret. Sometimes a woman would be already pregnant when she
843 entered the hut for such purely social reasons. Since the number
343 of weeks until she came to term might be calculated from the last day a woman was in the hut, it therefore could happen that she gave birth in what seemed to be the eighth month of pregnancy.

841 When a group of women were together in the menstrual hut they
517 could engage in a number of interesting activities. The only work they were permitted to do was to gather firewood for use there, prepare their own food, and wash their clothes (at a place separate from
[304] the usual spot). It was generally while in the hut that an adolescent girl underwent tattooing. The only game the women played was
[524] "eye-bean," an ancient Old World game which involved the redistribution of beans in a series of a dozen depressions. In general girls were not allowed to play this until they had their first pregnancy, but younger girls did play it too while in the menstrual hut.

841 Cooking vessels kept in the hut were common to the whole village,
415 and were in constant use. There was no need to destroy or even purify them after use, since everyone involved with them was in a state
264 of pollution. Foodstuffs could be given to the women by their rela-
[783] tives, but it was taboo to give them cooked foods. No pot, basket or cloth would be taken to the hut with food, since it could not be taken back home afterwards. Thus when a woman in the hut was

and all sleep in a vacant house, or one where only a widow lives, or one with a newborn baby (and hence no possibility of adult sexual activity at night). If a group is sleeping in such a house children of the opposite sex are not allowed in it.

5.20. In the last century children might only wash once a month, and be really dirty the rest of the time. Now they are washed every evening, and after reaching five years they do this for themselves. In the morning they only wash the face and clean the teeth with charcoal and a twig. Until about 1930 girls below five wore no undergarments but were simply wrapped in a loincloth. Even above that age boys and girls from very poor families continued to dress like that. Now both boys and girls wear vests and underpants from an early age. I will not offer further details on their dress here, as a full account may be found in Hockings (1979 b). By the age of seven or eight children knew how to wash their clothes; but since about 1930 and the requirements of schooling they have usually given their dirty clothes to an obliging sister or mother.

5.21. In summary, we can see that children become enculturated partly by the tales their elders entertain them with, and partly by moving freely around the village, doing things together like working and playing and sleeping. As in all parts of India, small children look to their elder siblings for guidance and leadership. As one proverb expresses this, "If the firstborn is not up to the ears, how can the later-born reach to the horns?" Outdoor group games are popular with the very young, and will be supervised by some old man or woman. In later childhood team sports such as football and a near-lethal form of field hockey are played between village teams. There are also hopscotch games, board games and string figures to while away the time or sharpen the wits of children at various ages. As we will now outline, there is also a series of childhood ceremonies which educate a young person in the values and the structure of his society, and in some cases affect his appearance and attitudes.

Childhood Ceremonies

5.22. This is not the place to offer a detailed ethnographic account of the various life-cycle ceremonies that are performed: they have already been described elsewhere by Natesa Sastri (1892) and